

REMARKS

The Applicants request reconsideration of the rejection.

Claims 1-12 are pending.

The Applicants request acknowledgement of the claim for foreign priority benefits under 35 U.S.C. §119, as well as acknowledgement of the certified copy of Japanese priority document number 2001-026298. The certified copy was filed August 29, 2001, with the original application papers.

In the Office Action, the Examiner reminded the Applicants of the proper language and format for an Abstract of the Disclosure. Although no objection was made, the Applicants have rewritten the Abstract to ensure compliance with the Examiner's reminder.

Claims 1-3, and 9-11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Miida et al., U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0049839 (Miida). Claims 4-8 and 12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Miida.

The Applicants traverse these rejections without amendment to the claims, noting that Miida does not appear to be available as prior art in a rejection of the present claims. The Applicants note Miida's U.S. filing date of

October 24, 2001, which postdates the present application's U.S. filing date of August 29, 2001. Therefore, the Applicants request withdrawal of the rejection.

In addition, the Applicants submit that the claims as filed are patentably distinct from Miida. The Applicants note that each pending claim requires a step, or an apparatus element configured to perform the step, of analyzing the consumption status of consumer goods or reagents according to consumer goods (reagent) supplier and according to consumer goods (reagents) that the consumer goods (reagent) suppliers deal in. In other words, the claimed invention performs the consumption analysis not simply based on consumption status of goods, but also based on the individual suppliers of the goods.

Miida, on the other hand, is directed to a system and method for collecting and providing information related to consumption of goods by a single consumer product, which goods are supplied by a single supplier. Therefore, there is no need, and no disclosure, by Miida for analyzing consumption status according to supplier or according to goods that the suppliers deal in.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, the Applicants request reconsideration of the rejection and allowance of the claims.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Daniel J. Stanger". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Daniel" being more prominent.

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